

The men also scooped up calves that were too tired to keep up. When a calf dropped behind the herd, his head down and his tongue hanging out, he was carted to a truck-drawn trailer and tossed in. The truck toted the passel of tired infants to Parker Mountain, where they would rejoin their mothers on the range.

By late afternoon, the hills gave way to a broad range that seemed to go on forever.

"The big high and lonesome," Traveller said when the closeness fell away to vastness.

Asked what the "big high and

Now the stroke into a new canter. As they neared the familiar waterhole, they stretched to an eager gallop.

The campsite was around a hill and over the rise from the watering hole. Chosen for its rare grove of rustling aspen, it offered beauty, a bit of a wind break and plenty of firewood.

The lead riders had already started a fire and begun work on the mutton when the rest of the group rode up. It is a tradition on the Leavitt cattle drives to have mutton and shepherd potatoes on the first night of the drive. Not because mutton —

nervous: He will be alone often this summer. Hallows will return to the Parker range several times in the next five months, moving the cattle to fresh grass and checking the fences that border the range.

The campsite that bustled that night with jokes, banjo music and the cheers from a poker win will be his alone.

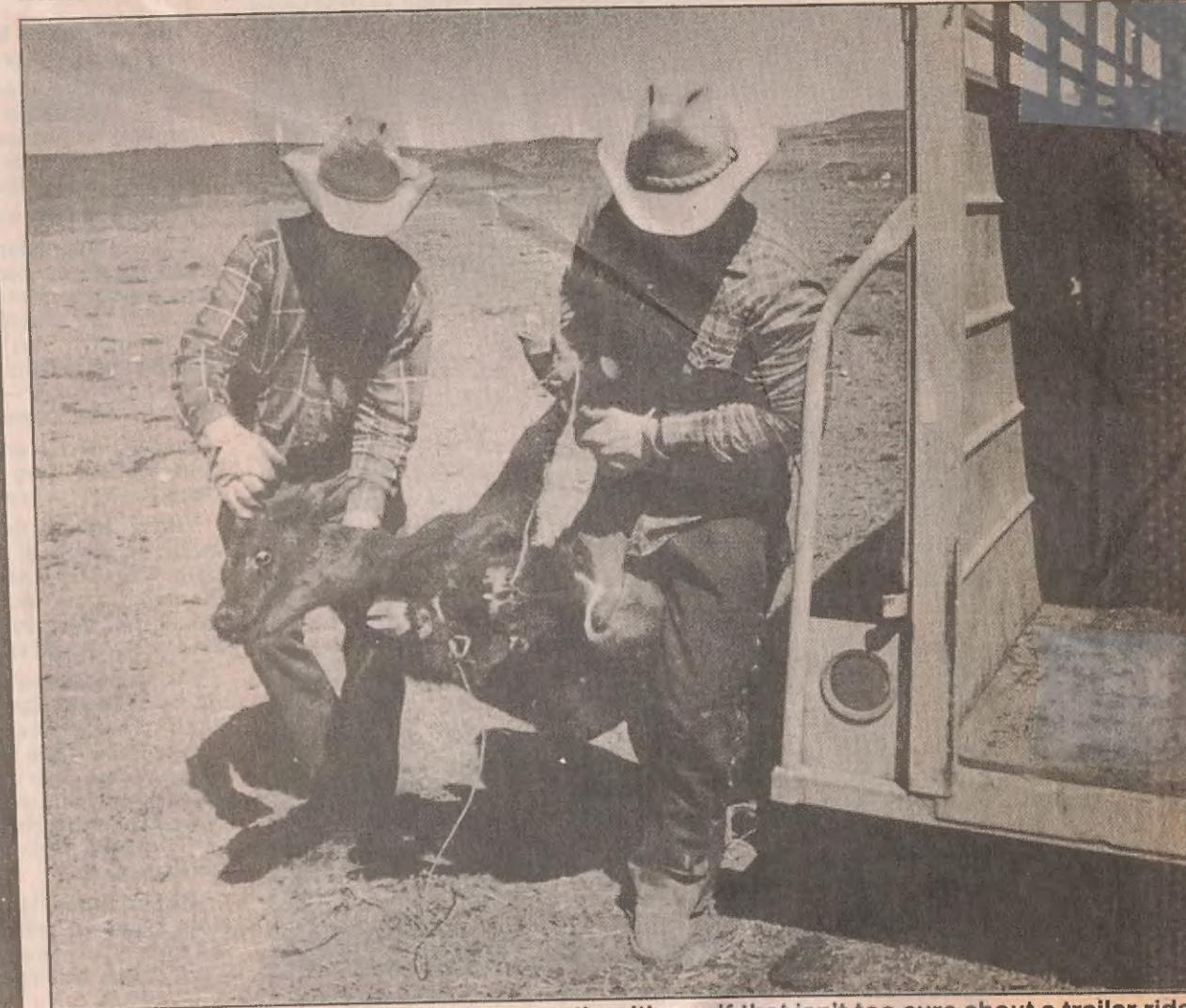
Until October, when the Leavitts fly in, the relatives drive over, the neighbors show up and everyone rides into the Parker range to bring those dogies home.



David Leavitt says good night to Kathleen Hunter on a starry, starry night.



David Okerlund grabs the tail of a bawling calf that fell behind and will be hauled via trailer.



Thayne Taylor, left, and Gary Hallows wrestle with a calf that isn't too sure about a trailer ride.

DOGIES

Continued from B1

Several riders fell to the rear, shepherding scores of calves that bawled anxiously because they couldn't see their mothers. Rows and rows of narrow calve bottoms swayed in the sun as the youngsters trudged behind the herd.

One mile into the drive, the herd turned back and ran for the pasture.

It was the calves. Suddenly some cow got it into her head that she hadn't seen her calf for awhile and didn't know where it was. She bolted and the rest of the herd followed.

Forget everything you saw on the old "Rawhide" shows about stopping a running herd. Cows don't stop running until cows are ready to stop running. Riders at the back dashed back to the fence to block the entrance to the pasture. Riders in the middle tried in vain to halt the stampede.

"Cows and calves will always go back to the last place they nursed," Traveller said. "You know how the little calves on the back keep trying to turn around and go back. That's why. They want to go back to the last place they saw mom."

The cows stopped running at the blocked fence. The men gave the herd a few minutes to rediscover their calves, then started over.

As they pushed the cattle, Traveller and Hallows scanned the herd for calves that hadn't been marked or castrated. Most of them had been done earlier in the spring. When the men spotted an unsuspecting baby bull, they chased him down, roped him, threw him to the ground, cut notches in his ears and made him a steer.

lonesome" was, Traveller quoted the first stanza of Baxter Black's poem by the same name.

The big high and lonesome's a place in my mind,

like out from Lakeview to Burns, Or up on the Judith, or at Promontory

'bout where the U.P. track turns.

It's anywhere you feel tiny

when you get a good look at the sky,

and sometimes when it's a stormin'

you can look the Lord in the eye.

Later, in front of the campfire, he quoted the rest of the poem. Over breakfast the next morning, he quoted three or four more.

Traveller — like Hallows and Taylor — is a man unlike anyone else anywhere else. Their lives spent in tiny dots of towns on wide, empty land, they are unstained by crowds. Strangers to peer pressure, they evolve into wholly unique people because there is no push to become a reflection of the bustle around them.

The riders dropped the herd at the edge of the range. The front of the herd was already miles ahead, strung out across a mountainside.

The men ushered the calves toward the center of the herd to give mothers and babies a chance to find each other, then they rode off toward camp.

The horses recognized the narrow path to the traditional campsite. In the last hours of the drive, they had been walking slowly. Reluctant to chase into the brush after prodigal calves, they waited for commands to be given twice.

even mutton cooked in cast-iron pots on hot coals amid the romance of the range — tastes all that good. But because it's a tradition.

Ranch hands slaughter a sheep a few days before the drive. The fresh mutton is carved up and hauled into the hills.

Traveller brought out the pot of baked beans he began preparing two days ago and set it in the coals. He divided his time between the beans and his pineapple upside down cake. Traveller is famous for those beans and that cake.

He put circles of small pebbles in the bottom of a cast-iron pot, placed the pineapple rings on the pebbles and dropped a maraschino cherry in the middle of each ring. He sprinkled nuts and brown sugar around the rings, poured his batter on top, put a lid on and set the pot on the coals.

Dinner was ready at dusk. Bed summoned at dark.

The plains were silent. No birds. No coyotes. The cows were miles away, so even their restlessness couldn't break the stillness.

The stars hung so thick over the range they made a mockery of the city's pallid nights. The Milky Way could barely be traced among the other million points of light crowding the sky.

The tired bedded down. The restless played poker in the large tent. Hallows slipped into the tent to retrieve his cot. He set it up under the aspen, preferring the chill and the stars to the heated tent and the company.

He tried to explain. "Have you ever been alone so much of your life that when you get thrown with a bunch of people, no matter how much you love them, you get

